***Big Questions: Looking to God’s Word for Answers
“…always being ready to make a defense…” I Peter 3:15***

**Has God Spoken? Romans 1:18-20**

**Background to Romans 1:18-25**

* The Gospel Displays the Righteousness of God, Romans 1:16-17

**Exposition of Romans 1:18-20**

**I. The Unrighteousness of Humanity Reveals the Wrath of God, Romans 1:18**

* **Wrath: God’s sustained, passionate, holy distain for human sin**
* **Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness**
	+ **Specifically, unrighteousness used to suppress the truth**
	+ **Suppress: to press down, to repress**

**II. God Speaks Truth About Himself Through His Creation, Romans 1:19**

* **God made it evident**
	+ **Clear, obvious, understood, visible**
	+ **Evident within them - Conscience**
	+ **Evident to them - Intellect**

**III. His Attributes, His Character, His Nature Have Been Clearly Communicated, Romans 1:20**

* **His invisible attributes, that is**
	+ **His eternal power**
	+ **His divine nature**
* **Have Been Clearly Seen**
	+ **This clear message gets through: Clear, obvious, understood, visible**
* **So that all suppressors of truth are without any excuse**

**Conclusion:** God has clearly revealed His nature to us through His creation and our conscience, but our natural reaction to His revelation is to suppress it. The problem of unbelief originates from rebellious hearts not from a lack of evidence.

**Next week’s Question: “Have We Listened?” Romans 1:21-25
18**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, **19**because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.  **20**For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

**I. Scripture Reading**

* **Read Romans 1:18-25 (Slides)**

**II. Background “Has God Spoken?” (Title Slide – Slide 1)**

* This week I want us to explore the question, “Has God Spoken?”
* Next week the question will be, “Have we listened?”
* Next week deal with the reaction to God’s revelation of His nature
* Next week deal with the motive for human reaction to God’s revelation
* This week deal with the question “Has God Spoken?”
* Has God said anything? Has God revealed His nature to us? Has God communicated any true or reality to us at all?
* In Genesis 3, this is the first question by Satan, “Has God said…?”
* Did God say anything? Even if He did say anything, does it matter to us?
* To make the claim that God spoke and that He spoke in such a way as to get through to us, prompts a cry of “arrogance” from those on the outside
* “You Christians are so arrogant to claim that there is absolute, objective truth.”
* Reminds me of a quote by G.K. Chesterton
* G. K. Chesterton said one hundred years ago (1908), “What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the arena of ambition. Modesty has settled upon conviction; where it was never meant to be. A person was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been reversed . . . We are on the road to producing a race of people too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication table.”  **(Slide 2)**
* Background to the text for the next two weeks, one of the greatest statements in all the Bible on what God intends through the Gospel
* **Read Romans 1:16-17 (Slide 3)**
* God’s purpose in the Gospel is to reveal something about Himself
* Having salvation depend on faith means that all righteousness comes from God
* These verses have played a key role in the life of the church and church history
* Martin Luther, when teaching the Book of Romans seems to have been greatly influenced by these verses and this doctrinal idea
* It was a passage in Augustine, when Augustine wrote, this righteousness is not the righteousness whereby the sinner is righteous, but it is a borrowed righteousness
* When a person believes God gives them His righteousness
* When a person rejects God’s revelation, that person receives God’s wrath

**III. The Unrighteousness of Humanity Reveals the Wrath of God, Romans 1:18**

* **Read Romans 1:18 (Slide 4)**
* See the contrasting revelation of the nature of God
* In the first case God reveals His righteousness in the Gospel
* In the second case God reveals His wrath through the way He responds to ungodliness and unrighteousness
* The wrath of God, not thumos which is usually associated with a sudden burst of heat, but the word orge
* **Wrath: God’s sustained, passionate, holy distain for human sin**
* **Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness**
	+ **Specifically, unrighteousness used to suppress the truth**
* **Suppress: to press down, to repress**
* Like a giant spring pressed to the wall – truth is the recoiled mechanism of that spring and humanity with heart and mind is pushing down on that truth
* **Richard Dawkins “Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of being designed for a purpose.” (Slide 5)**
* **Francis Crick “Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see has not been designed but rather evolved.” (Slide 6)**
* We see the tendency of humanity to see the revelation of God and to respond to that revelation with repression, to press it down, to repress it
* This is true in the scientist, this is true in the humanist, this is also true in all of us in our religion as we will see next week
* The most natural response to repressing the truth of God is not atheism but religion

**IV. God Speaks Truth About Himself Through His Creation, Romans 1:19**

* **Read Romans 1:19 (Slide 7)**
* What truth are we suppressing about God?
* The truth of His existence, the truth of His nature
* **God made it evident**
	+ **Clear, obvious, understood, visible**
	+ **Evident within them - Conscience**
	+ **Evident to them - Intellect**
* If I told you, Kim Sweet got a haircut this week, if you saw her you would say “Of course she got a haircut. You didn’t need to tell me that.”
* Two ways or one, “for God made it evident in them” or “among them”
* The reason I am thinking Paul has at some level the concept of both the intellect and the conscience is that the means of suppression is not in ignorance
* In other words, if this were purely an intellectual argument He would have said that we “suppress the truth in ignorance.”
* But we suppress the truth in “unrighteousness”
* What truth? Again that He exist and that He is really, really powerful
* Like Psalm 8 and Psalm 19, Romans 1:19 claims that the creation is communicating something about the nature of God
* **Read Psalm 19:1 (Slide 8)**
* **Read Psalm 8:1 (Slide 9)**
* Paul speaks in this passage much like the psalmist spoke, the creation is screaming out to us that God is, that He is powerful, that He is majestic, that He cares what we do with His creation and with our life
* God has expectations due to the obvious revelation of His existence

**V. His Attributes, His Character, His Nature Have Been Clearly Communicated, Romans 1:20**

* **Read Romans 1:20 (Slide 10)**
* **His invisible attributes, that is**
	+ **His eternal power**
	+ **His divine nature**
* “Invisible attributes…clearly seen.” Is this a contradictory statement?
* We cannot see courage in a person, but we can see evidence of courage
* Courage is an invisible attribute, but the evidence of courage in a person’s life could be all around us – in a soldier, in a cancer patient, in a police officer or firefighter, in a missionary – we might say that they are courageous
* Their actions give us reason to conclude something about their character
* That is what Paul is saying about God, God’s actions in creation give us reason to conclude something about His character
* **Have Been Clearly Seen**
	+ **This clear message gets through: Clear, obvious, understood, visible**
* **So that all suppressors of truth are without any excuse**
* What excuse? “We didn’t know.” “We didn’t know You were there.” “We didn’t know You were righteous.” “We didn’t know You were powerful.” “We didn’t know that You hold people accountable for their actions.”

**VI. Conclusion (Blank slide – Slide 11)**

* God has clearly revealed His nature to us through His creation and our conscience, but our natural reaction to His revelation is to suppress it. The problem of unbelief originates from rebellious hearts not from a lack of evidence.